

oil comes from foreign sources. So that is a very serious problem for us.

I talked earlier about the savings having been 3 percent in 1992 and we moved it to 6 percent, those are American citizens saving their bucks, saving for the future. You know, for the first time since I think maybe World War II, 2 years ago this country had a negative savings rate. That goes directly to the management of our fiscal policy and the performance of the economy. I think that it is sad that we as a nation have a negative savings rate. We need to turn that around and one of the things that we can do as a government is do our job well. Let's identify those functions that we are supposed to do as a government, national security, transportation, education, and environmental protection. We need good strong foreign policy, and there are some other areas. But we ought to be willing and make sure that we perform those functions well, and we ought to be willing to pay for them and we ought not be wasting money.

I agree with many on the other side of the aisle that we can root out some waste. There has to be tremendous cooperation between the legislative body and the executive branch to figure out how to do that because the executive branch obviously operates those agencies that we appropriate money for. So it is their job to operate them and operate them efficiently, and we have an oversight role and we ought to continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Georgia for being here and I want to thank the other Blue Dogs who came in and helped today. I see another good Blue Dog in the Speaker's chair now, Representative SPACE from Ohio, one of our freshmen members, and we are very pleased to see you. You look good up there, Mr. Speaker.

OUR RICH HISTORY OF FAITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, tonight is a rather historic night because as people might be watching this at home, or if they happen to still be in this great, historic Chamber, if you look around, this room is draped with history. Unfortunately, when people look at this great assembly hall in which so many great debates and great pieces of legislation have passed, what they have become accustomed to seeing is if you are on this side of the aisle whenever there is anything that goes wrongs, there are fingers pointed on that side of the aisle in trying to blame everyone sitting over here. Of course the folks on that side of the aisle are turning over here and pointing their fingers in this direction. If anything good takes place, the folks on this side of the aisle want to stand up and take credit for those

things that are good, and folks on that side of the aisle want to do the same thing. And folks sitting at home begin to question and ask whether we can ever get anything done, whether we can ever come together as a body. Well tonight, that is what we do. Republicans and Democrats come together to talk about something that is the cornerstone of the American experience, and that is the rich history of faith that we have had in this country that has helped create our greatness, helped sustain us and that many of us who will speak here tonight for this next hour believe will continue to sustain us in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, right behind you tonight is a great phrase. It says "In God We Trust." As you stare out all around this magnificent room, you see some of the greatest lawgivers history and the world has ever known. But the ones you see across this room, you see just half of their face, their half profile except the one directly in front of you which is Moses who we recognize as perhaps one of the greatest lawgivers of all.

And throughout our country we have been steeped in an enormous history of faith that starts all of the way back with the commission that Christopher Columbus had when they talked about the grace of God; the first colonial grant to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584, the grace of God was mentioned in there. The first charter of Virginia in 1606, it referenced knowledge and worship of God. The Mayflower Compact in 1620, it talked about having undertaken for the glory of God. The Declaration of Independence we all know and can cite that those inalienable rights were endowed to us by what the writers of that document said were their creator.

The first act of Congress, 1774, they asked a minister to open with prayer, and they read four chapters of the Bible. And during the Civil War we are told that soldiers on both sides, Union and Confederates, that religion was the greatest sustainer of morale.

Of course we know numerous stories of the great faith of men and women as they were in slavery and fought to get out of that horrible institution.

In 1815, over 2,000 official government calls to prayer had been made by States in the Federal Government, and thousands more have been made since then.

In 1864 Congress added "In God We Trust" to the American coinage.

In 1870, the Federal Government made Christmas an official holiday.

In 1931, the Star Spangled Banner was our national anthem, including the phrase "in God is our trust."

In 1954 we added the phrase "one Nation under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.

And in 1956, Congress by law made "In God We Trust" our national motto. And, of course, we all know the significant role that faith and religion and the church played in the civil rights movement.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, for the next hour you will hear some of the greatest leaders in our country and certainly in this body who will come forth not as Republicans and not as Democrats, but come forth as Americans to talk about what we think is the core value system that we have been proud of in this Nation, and that is the rich history of faith that we have.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield to my good friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE).

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I thank RANDY FORBES for his great work in helping us put this event together tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 888 which affirms the rich spiritual and religious history of our Nation's founding and subsequent history and designates the first week of May each year as American Religious History Week for the appreciation of and education on America's history of religious faith.

As we join together on the floor of the U.S. House and stand beneath these words "In God We Trust," while recognizing the importance of a religious history week, let us remember the words of our Founding Fathers.

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

So begins our Constitution with those words of the Preamble.

But let us turn back the hands of time for a moment. The day is September 17, 1787. The time is 4 p.m. Thirty-nine men from across the United States look at another one with solemn but joyous faces. The arguments are over; the prayers have been answered; and the miracle has occurred: the Constitution of the United States has just been signed. From May 25 until now, for four long hot months, these men have toiled, not knowing whether their work was one of wisdom or folly. They have their hopes and their doubts. And they wondered whether it would succeed or fail to sustain this infant country.

The oldest delegate, Ben Franklin, rises from his chair. At age 81, he has seen this young Nation flounder already under 4 years of indecisive government that divided rather than united. He looks around the room at the men, many of whom were in their 20s and 30s. And he stares once more at the chair occupied by George Washington at the head of the assembly. He had speculated what the half-sun painted on the chair signified. And he said then, "I have often in the course of this session looked at that behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now at length I have the happiness to

know that it is a rising and not a setting sun."

Indeed, the miracle of Philadelphia had occurred. The United States was a rising and not a setting one, a Nation whose rays of influence, as we know, would one day be felt the world over.

But when we think about why this miracle occurred, when we look back 221 years later, do we know what happened in that hall before those 39 men came out and announced that they had, instead of rewriting the Articles of Confederation had written a new constitution for our country. They had deliberated, they had argued and debated. They had made sure that everyone's opinion was heard. Secondly, they showed their dedication in addition to their deliberation. That meant that they had put in sweat and long hours trying to find out what would benefit us all. But in addition to that deliberation and dedication, they also showed their devotion.

□ 2045

They knew that their reliance must not be just upon themselves, but first and foremost, upon God.

And as Franklin himself, who was not known as one of the most religious founding fathers, but himself acknowledged God's providence upon that group that met to write our Constitution, said, himself, as he looked at Washington, before they went out and announced in what is today known as Independence Hall in Philadelphia, he said, "I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it likely that an empire shall rise without his aid?"

"We have been assured," said Franklin, "in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this," said Franklin, "and I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

What a challenge to us today. What a challenge that that old man, at that time, Franklin, made to all of those young men who were ready to go out and announce what they'd done politically for a new country. But he himself said "we can only secure these blessings of liberty for ourselves and posterity when we take time too first pray and rely upon the hand of Almighty God." And that those 39 men did. Before they walked out of what is today known as Independence Hall to announce that we had a constitution for this new country, they spent time in prayer.

You know, that story has been sanitized out of our history books today, but those are Franklin's quotes. And I think it's a challenge to all of us to know that even this man knew scripture and knew that the hand of Almighty God had to be upon our country for us to succeed.

We, the people is how the Constitution begins. Will we let the miracle endure? Will we remember what John Adams, our second president, said when our constitution was made? "Only for a moral and religious people, it is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Mr. Speaker, I challenge us tonight, as we share this time together, I thank Mr. FORBES for giving me this opportunity to share this occasion with him and all of my colleagues who will soon follow, that we support H. Res. 888 as American Religious History Week so that we, as a country, will never forget the very words and actions of our founding fathers, who we are as a Nation, how deep our religious roots run, and remind us of the historical significance that is well documented, of faith and prayer, that we celebrate America's religious heritage, that we remember that we have opportunities in this great land that God has blessed us with, and may we always honor those opportunities in our reliance upon divine providence.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, we just appreciate the leadership of Congressman MCINTYRE on all of these issues of faith. MIKE, thank you so much.

And I'd like to now recognize another great leader on faith issues across the country from the State of Arkansas, Congressman JOHN BOOZMAN.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to support American Religious History Week. This great country was founded on religious principles, and the ideal of our founders can be seen in the halls of this very building, the symbol of American democracy, the Capitol.

Statuary Hall, the former meeting place of the House of Representatives, now home to statues donated by individual States, was the site of church services for over 50 years, and the Speaker's podium was used as the preacher's pulpit during that time.

Several of the statues in that great hall are of religious figures important to the growth of this great nation.

John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania was persuaded by his father to study the ministry. He was ordained in the Church of England. From there God called him into the life of politics; serving in the House of Burgesses and becoming a commander in the Continental Army during the revolution. Then he was elected to the first Congress and also served as a senator.

Like so many of the other religious figures in these halls, these men have made significant contributions. Men like Roger Williams, a priest in the Church of England, founded the colony of Rhode Island and wrote the declaration of the principle of religious liberty.

Thomas Starr King, a Unitarian minister, was a fiery orator who spoke favorably of the Union in California in the 1860s, and is credited with saving California from becoming a separate republic.

Father Damien's statue is one of the most recognizable. He was an ordained

priest in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu, Hawaii in the mid 1860s. He risked his health ministering to lepers, building chapels and comforting the sick before leprosy took his own life.

The accomplishments of these religious men honored in Statuary Hall are felt coast to coast. Now, hundreds of years later, religion is still important, and I'm committed to continuing the efforts started by these great men.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the congressman from Arkansas for his great leadership on this; and now recognize another leader from the State of New Mexico, Congressman STEVE PEARCE.

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. FORBES for your leadership in this call to establish American Religious History Week.

Also, as a cosponsor of H. Res. 888, I'm strongly supportive of the idea that we should remember that we should always acknowledge the founding fathers' belief that this Nation was indeed blessed by our Maker, that we would, as a Nation, acknowledge our corporate belief.

It's important to remember not only our founding, but also to take a look at where we're headed as a Nation. We acknowledge that our Nation was founded on the right to choose to believe or not believe, but also our founding fathers gave us choices in exactly how to express our faith.

I believe that acknowledging America's rich spiritual and religious history is important and it is a great step towards accomplishing what would be the future of this country, America's religious heritage.

It troubles me that we are beginning to see shifts in this country. We're seeing shifts, not in ideology, not in philosophy, but over whether we can even declare our faith publicly. In this country we're beginning to hear people say that if you declare faith publicly, you're infringing on their rights. I simply do not agree or believe in that.

If you want to acknowledge your faith, there are people who say that it should be behind closed doors. This is sad. Often this mind-set is originating right here in Washington. This mind-set is originating in this institution, but it's also originating even in institutions where the members are not elected, and I think those are critical things for us to look at as we consider where this Nation is headed.

This Nation has a motto "In God We Trust." It was approved by Congress, and yet it's being circumvented sometimes by unelected officials. "In God We Trust" is printed on coins, on our currency. It is engraved on our buildings. It appears over the entrance to the Senate Chambers, and you can see the phrase engraved in this Chamber on the wall above the Speaker's dais. This phrase is woven into the fabric of our Nation, but we're beginning to see an unraveling of the phrase, an unraveling of this tradition of declaring that

we do trust in God. This is a string that should not be cut.

In 2006, the U.S. Mint announced plans to move the inscription "In God We Trust" from the face of the Presidential Dollar coin pieces to the thin edge around the dollar coin.

In February of 2006 the Treasury announced that in an accidental omission an unknown number of Presidential coins had made it past inspectors and were sent into circulation without the words "In God We Trust" at all. Some estimates are as many as 50,000 of these coins are in circulation.

I understand that mistakes happen, but sending 50,000 coins without the basic motto which this institution declared should be on our currency is a major mistake. I ask for the U.S. Mint to give a full report and accounting of the situation.

Our history tells us the importance of God and faith in the birth of our Nation. The problems with the phrase, "In God We Trust" being omitted from our coin is just one indicator of how badly we're drifting off course. It is fitting that we honor the spiritual history with a week dedicated to remembering our founding and ensuring that the lasting connection which so many Americans share in and believe in is a part of our national fabric.

I support H. Res. 888, and agree that we should, indeed, establish a week which declares American religious history. And I thank Mr. FORBES for yielding time.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, we thank the gentleman from New Mexico. And now another great leader in the Congress of the United States from the State of Maryland, Mr. ROSCOE BARTLETT.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Thank you very much, Randy, for organizing this special order this evening.

Most of the founders of our country were deeply religious. You wouldn't know that by reading our textbooks. They have been bled dry of any meaningful reference to how religious our founders were.

One of those founders was Patrick Henry. And his words, some of his words may be in our textbook, "Give me liberty or give me death." But I will bet you the textbook will not include the context of this.

This was said on March 23, 1775, at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia; and this is what he said. "An appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left us. But we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God that presides over the destinies of nations. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone. Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it Almighty God. I know not what course others may take but, as for me, give me liberty, or give me death."

Alexis de Tocqueville, the young Frenchman, toured this country in 1831, and this is what he said. "I sought for the key to the greatness and genius

of America in her great harbors, her fertile fields and boundless forests, in her rich mines and vast world commerce, in her universal public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless constitution.

"But not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

In 1863 Abraham Lincoln declared a National Day of Humiliation, and I really love his words. He was not supposed to be a really religious man, but listen to what he said. "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity where we have grown in numbers and wealth and power as no other Nation has ever grown.

"But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

"Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that the God that made us! It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

Abraham Lincoln understood that this was an experiment. In his Gettysburg address he said "Four score and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new Nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

We're now engaged in a great civil war testing where that Nation or any Nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. Mr. Lincoln, this has been a very successful experiment. But I think the words of Alexis de Tocqueville are true, that America will continue to be great so long as America continues to be good.

And Mr. FORBES, it will be very difficult for America to continue to be good if we forget how much we depend on God. Thank you for yielding to me, sir.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. BARTLETT, for those great words.

And now another leader on so many of these issues from the State of North Carolina, Congressman ROBIN HAYES.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank my dear friend and colleague, RANDY FORBES, and all the other Members who are gathered here tonight in support of House Resolution 888.

I rise today to speak in support of this resolution that honors the reli-

gious foundation of this country and designates the first week in May as American Religious Heritage Week.

□ 2100

From the devout convictions of the Continental Army to the current steadfast faith of our men and women fighting the war on terrorism, faith and religion have played a significant role in America's history, especially in times of conflict.

Military chaplains have a long history in serving the religious needs of the Armed Forces. There's a list of chaplains in the U.S. military that goes back to George Washington, who first sought to minister for his Virginia regiment in 1756. Washington placed the success and survival of his Continental Army on the power of faith and prayer.

His most famous acclamation was his prayer at Valley Forge. He said, "Bless O Lord the whole race of mankind, and let the world be filled with the knowledge of Thee and Thy son Jesus. Of all dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens.

"To the distinguished character of a Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian."

Today, military chaplains are found in every part of the military from army medical centers, veterans' clinics, official ceremonies, as well as combat zones. Now more than ever our soldiers, veterans, and their families need spiritual leadership and guidance; yet in some places, chaplains and their religious convictions are coming under fire. In several instances across the country, military chaplains have been marginalized for their reference to God and the Bible in religious ceremony.

Tonight, as we honor the religious foundation of America and commend the role of military chaplains, I hope that we can continue in the steps of our Founding Fathers by upholding the importance of faith, prayer, and religion.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, and now from Minnesota, another leader on many of these issues, Congresswoman MICHELE BACHMANN.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia.

Our President John Quincy Adams said, "The virtue which had been infused into the Constitution of the United States . . . was no other than . . . those abstract principles which had been first proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence—namely, the self-evident truths of the natural and unalienable rights of man . . . This was the platform upon which the Constitution of the United States had been erected."

Abraham Lincoln similarly made reference to the importance of these

foundational principles when he said, "I have never had a thought politically which did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."

The Declaration contains 12 such sentiments which follow:

Pillar number 1: National Sovereignty.

The Declaration of Independence could just as well be called the "Declaration of National Sovereignty."

Pillar number 2: Natural law. Natural law is the universal moral code that governs all people.

Pillar number 3: Self-evident Truth. We hold these truths to be self-evident, evidence for all to see.

Pillar number 4: Equality. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

Pillar number 5: Inalienable Rights. Inalienable rights are not granted by government. They are granted to us by God. The role of government, then, is to protect our God-given rights.

Pillar number 6: The Inalienable Right to Life.

Pillar number 7: The Inalienable Right to Liberty.

Pillar number 8: The Inalienable Right to Private Property.

Pillar number 9: The primary purpose of government is to protect the inalienable rights. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men.

Pillar number 10: Popular Sovereignty. To secure these rights, governments derived their just powers from the consent of the governed.

Pillar number 11: Federalism and State rights. The Declaration affirms not only the sovereignty of the Federal United States, but also the sovereignty of the separate states.

And finally, Pillar number 12: Divine Providence. The Declaration of Independence ends with this sentence:

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

The Colonists stated their conviction that there is a God in the Heavens who ultimately governs in the affairs of men. There is no Natural law without a Law giver. The unalienable rights they said were God-given. Equality, they said, was the state in which we were created by God.

May God bless to this present generation the memory of the Declaration of Independence and the 12 principles contained therein.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we recognize the rich spiritual and religious history of our Nation's founding and subsequent history, and I rise today to express support for the designation of the first week in May as "American Religious History Week" to raise the appreciation of and to promote education on America's history of religious faith.

In doing so, we recommit ourselves to our nation's common religious faith, also called "the American Creed." We reconnect our people with our most basic principles—our funda-

mental statement of faith—as stated in our foundational Document, the Declaration of Independence.

This document is a Declaration that we are first and foremost a religious country. It clarifies that our breaking of the bond with Great Britain was justified by the spiritual principle of Natural Law—the universal and God-given understanding of morality and human rights that applies to all people and all nations throughout the world.

This American Creed stated in the Declaration clarifies that all people are entitled to be free, to have their lives protected and to own property. Why? Because our Creator—God made us that way.

Our forefathers understood that God made us to be largely like him. That is, they understood that just as God is free, he made us with a right to be free. Just as God lives, he made us with a right to live; and just as God owns everything, he made us with a right to own some things.

The founders understood that religion is the foundation of a just society. Here it is in their own words.

"All our basic rights and freedoms are recognized by the American Creed as belonging to us and inherent in us because of religious principles. If we fail to recognize our nation's religious foundation, these same rights and freedoms become increasingly vulnerable."

The Declaration ends by appealing to "Divine Providence". That is, our Declaration says that the success of this new republic depends on God looking favorably upon it and protecting it.

Today, we recommit ourselves and our country to these all-important religious foundational principles. Today, we recommit ourselves to being free.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, now I would like to recognize another good friend from the State of South Carolina (GRESHAM BARRETT).

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, President John Adams once said, "The highest story of the American Revolution is this. It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

So often we hear about the idea of separation of church and State. Mr. Speaker, I believe in the idea of separation of not from church, a distinction worth noting.

Our Founding Fathers never believed that faith should be taken out of our lives. However, they did believe that government should not interfere with an individual's faith. Unfortunately, in the society which we live in today, this distinction has been ignored. It has been forced out of everyday lives, and it saddens me, Mr. Speaker.

The faith of the American people remains at the center of our great Nation. Our Founding Fathers were faithful men who believed every individual had the right to express their religious beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination.

It was Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Speaker, who first uttered the term "separation of church and state," indeed be-

lieved that faith played a vital role in the government of our Nation. While President, Jefferson said, "No Nation has ever existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be."

During his public life, Jefferson urged local government officials to make land available specifically for Christian purposes, chose to attend church each Sunday at the Capitol, and even provided the service with paid government musicians to assist in the worship. Jefferson proposed that the Great Seal of the United States depict a story in the Bible and include the word "God" in its motto.

Enclosed are Presidential documents with the phrase, "In the year of our Lord Christ, by the President, Thomas Jefferson."

Mr. Speaker, I'm thankful to be able to address this House on this subject and for the opportunity to cosponsor this legislation designating an American Religious History Week. By their actions, our Founding Fathers showed us that faith and government can and should exist together. It's important for those here and now and future generations, Mr. Speaker, to remember the religious heritage of our Nation. I'm convinced that it's only by God's grace that our Nation has survived the many trials and tests we've experienced. And I will continue to turn to God to seek his guidance and make decisions affecting our country, and I believe by remaining faithful, our Nation will continue to thrive as a beacon of hope in the future.

I pray, Mr. Speaker, that God will continue to bless America.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you for those words of wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the gentleman from Michigan (THADDEUS MCCOTTER).

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia and the gentleman from North Carolina for holding this.

Phillip Bobbitt, the author of the "Shield of Achilles," once wrote that if you don't know where you have been, you won't know where you're going, and any road will take you there.

Throughout the history of the 20th century, we have seen where people who deny the role of religion within their government—the hells to which they have descended, hells of which Dostoevsky warned a long time ago that all manners of things are possible in the absence of God.

It has been said tonight, and rightly so, that the United States, from its founding, has understood a self-evident truth that our liberty comes not from the pen of a government bureaucrat but is written on our hearts by almighty God. It is this self-evident truth that allows us to understand that it is our liberty which has curated the subservient government which exists to protect our God-given rights.

I think it is also important that we understand that history is not merely something that happened 200 years ago,

100. But let us look back to our own recent history of religion and its salubrious effects on the American people.

In the civil rights struggle, it was the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, who understood that America was a country founded upon the principle of equality for all because all human beings were endowed by the creator with the gift of liberty. It was the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, who appealed to the conscience of this country to allow us to live together and to one day achieve the dream of equality, regardless of race.

In pursuit of this noble goal, in pursuit of this Godly goal, Dr. King was slain. And in a eulogy performed for him in Indianapolis in the wake of this tragedy, it was Senator Robert F. Kennedy who said, And even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart until then our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.

In that moment of anguish for our Nation, which would be repeated shortly thereafter for Senator KENNEDY, we saw that religion and government in the United States were not exclusive but complimentary. And we saw that what binds us together as the greatest Nation on the face of the earth stems not from government but from the yearnings and the common bounds of our own heart.

This recognition, this understanding of where we've been, where we are, and where together we must go, is what will allow America to remain a community of destiny, inspired and guided by the virtuous genius of her free people and eternally blessed by the unfathomable grace of God.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Congressman McCOTTER.

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, when Jefferson was given the duty and obligation of drafting the Declaration of Independence, he could have turned to the Revolutionaries of lower Europe, the followers of Russo, which led to the Jacobites and the reign of terror who believe that man is the center of the universe and man is the ultimate judge of what is truth.

But instead, Jefferson turned to the writings of Blackstone and Locke. Ms. Blackstone, the great jurist of England, examined the laws of England and laid them side by side with the biblical statements to come up with something called the Doctrine of Natural Law. And Blackstone said, When the supreme being formed the universe and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter from which it could never depart, without which it would cease to be.

This will of a Maker is called the Law of Nature for as God, when he created matter and did it with a principle of mobility, established certain rules for the perpetual direction of that mo-

tion so when he created man and indued him with free will to conduct himself in all parts of life, he laid down certain immutable laws of human nature.

Considering the Creator only as a being of infinite power, he was able unquestionably to prescribe whatever laws he placed to his creature, man, whoever unfit or severe. But as he is also a being of infinite wisdom, he has laid down only such laws as were founded in those relations of justice.

These are the quotes of Blackstone. It was the thoughts of Blackstone, in fact many of the words that were incorporated directly into the Declaration of Independence, and that great document set forth not only our severance from Great Britain, but also a statement as to the source of laws in this country that God is the source of liberty, that man is given the power to form governments for the purpose of protecting those rights that God gives.

□ 2115

Jefferson took that knowledge, sat down, inscribed that into the Declaration, and that's what forms the basis of the law of America. It's the law of nature and of nature's God.

Mr. FORBES. I'd now like to recognize from the State of Colorado, Ms. MARILYN MUSGRAVE.

Ms. MUSGRAVE. Thank you, Mr. FORBES, for your leadership on this issue.

As we ponder the importance of our spiritual heritage tonight, we need to remember that it's really central to the founding of America. We are reminded of this when we cite the Pledge of Allegiance at public events and in our children's classrooms. We all know that our Nation's motto is, "In God We Trust," and that is printed on our currency, and it's really imprinted right here in the Capitol Building itself.

Christianity was not only important in American life during the periods of discovery, exploration, colonization, and growth, but it has also been incorporated and acknowledged in all three branches of our American government since its inception.

Our Founding Fathers firmly believed that America could not be built or governed without acknowledging that "God rules in the affairs of men."

John Quincy Adams once said, "The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity." It is in this religious tradition that our Nation has grown over the course of 300 years.

Our foundation of prayer has been a rock when the tides of freedom and peace were changing. America has not been immune to the devastation of war, and in the midst of intense trials and hardship, our leaders have always turned to God and prayer.

During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt not only led the Nation in a 6-minute prayer during D Day on June 6, 1944, but he also de-

clared, "If we will not prepare to give all that we have and all that we are to preserve Christian civilization in our land, we shall go to destruction."

America's religious legacy must be preserved. If some in America continue to deny the importance of our spiritual heritage, our leaders and our citizens will no longer have this foundation to stand on as many have stood on for centuries.

I close with the words of former President Ronald Reagan: "The lesson is clear that in the winning if freedom and in the living of life, the first step is prayer."

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, MARILYN, for those words, and now I'd like to yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN).

Mr. WITTMAN of Virginia. I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the significant contributions of Thomas Jefferson to the religious heritage of this great Nation.

Thomas Jefferson stated in the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in 1779 that "No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

Our Founding Fathers conquered tremendous obstacles to establish our esteemed United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The adoption of these documents as laws of the land brought forth the certainty that we would live in a Nation where our natural rights as citizens are defended with all our might.

Thomas Jefferson, the second President of the United States, and one of our Nation's Founding Fathers, understood the need for protecting our natural rights. All of these rights were important to him, but none meant more than the freedom of religion.

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was written in 1779 by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The statute declares that compulsory religion is wrong, that no religion should be enforced on an individual, and that the freedom of religion is a natural right. As a Virginian, I am indebted to the Commonwealth and the General Assembly for the adoption in 1786 of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. The statute's doctrine and principles have inspired individuals beyond the Commonwealth and across the Nation.

Thomas Jefferson requested that three of his greatest accomplishments be listed on his epitaph. Freedom of religion was so important to him that the Virginia Statute for Religious

Freedom was listed along with the founding of the University of Virginia and the writing of the United States Declaration of Independence as his greatest lifetime achievements. The statute ultimately facilitated the path to complete religious freedom in the United States and was eventually included in the first amendment to our Constitution.

Jefferson believed and argued that the concept of enforced religion is entirely erroneous, and he fought to uphold any measure that would contradict his belief in religious freedom. Throughout the years since Jefferson, our Nation has undergone tremendous internal and external turmoil, and it has gone through some significant transition. Yet, the right of religious freedom has stood tried and true.

I am privileged to join my colleagues from Virginia, Representative FORBES, and 83 other cosponsors in signing my name on House Resolution 888, legislation which will continue to preserve and affirm our natural rights that were set forth by our Nation's Founding Fathers.

I am honored to live in such a Nation where I can openly profess my faith in my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to share with others Christ's word, as well as the impact His words have on my life.

Jefferson once stated, "From the dissensions among Sects themselves arise necessarily a right of choosing and necessity of deliberating to which we will conform. But if we choose for ourselves, we must allow others to choose also, and so reciprocally, this establishes religious liberty."

I am truly grateful to Thomas Jefferson, a Virginian, a true patriot, a Founding Father, and above all else, a leader whose vision has stood the test of time and a man who stood so resolutely for religious freedom in our Nation.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Rob, and now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize another great leader in the House of Representatives from the State of Texas, Congressman JOHN CARTER.

Mr. CARTER. I thank my good friend from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) for yielding to me.

I've been very, very impressed with the folks that have gathered here today to tell us about the religious history of the United States of America. It is so important that Americans and Members of this House remember the history of this country and how important the Christian religion has been to the history of the United States of America, and what an important part of the very basis of our society it is.

But I think it's important, too, for the people of this House and for the men and women back home to know that this religious history continues in the House of Representatives of the United States of America.

The first day I walked through the door of this beloved building, the Capitol of the United States, the first time

my old Texas boots set foot inside this building, I was approached by a man who said, "I think you're Carter from Texas, right? You just got elected." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, my name's Ron from Kansas." He said, "I saw by your Web site that you proclaim yourself to be a Christian. I want to invite you to a gathering of men and women that get together and study the Bible and pray together for this country, and we're meeting tomorrow morning. Would you join us?"

Recognizing who Jim Rynun was, the famous miler from Kansas, I was flattered by the invitation, and I actually got there an hour early for the event and sat outside in the halls before the rest of them showed up. But I can tell you that that has been a major part of my life for the 6 years I've been in Congress because of the fellowship of those men and women who gathered that day in various numbers. Bipartisan is part of the deal, and we will sit and talk, visit, pray and discuss the Bible, and it revitalizes my life every day and every week.

And I have a friend back home who is in the radio business, and I call him from time to time. He always signs off with me by saying, "Be sure and do the Lord's work in the devil's city." It's a joke and we laugh about it, but the reality is that there are people who think of that, of this city as the devil's city, and I'm here to tell him that the Lord is alive and well. The Lord Jesus Christ reigns in the capital city of the United States of America.

They need to hear that that is part of the present history of the United States, and there are men and women who gather almost every day as people of faith and pray for this great Nation.

The little group that we're a part of, we formed up the National Prayer Caucus. That National Prayer Caucus is catching on around the country, and people are gathering and praying for the United States of America. I would hope that every Member of this Congress and every American citizen would take to their knees and pray for the future of our country and for the salvation of America.

That is what we need. That is what saves our Nation and that's what's here. The history is not only the history of the past, which is glorious; it is the history of the present, and the present is full of grace and peace and love of Jesus Christ in this building and around this town, and I want everybody to know it. It's part of our Nation today, just as it was at its founding and throughout its history.

So it's wonderful that I may stand and rise in support this week where we acknowledge the history, the religious history of our Nation.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, John, and now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize someone who has led us in so many of these issues for so many years from the State of Michigan, Congressman VERN EHLERS.

Mr. EHLERS. I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding, and I espe-

cially thank him for organizing this discussion together.

My comments are going to be a bit different from some of the others because I'm going to talk about an event in my hometown this week which brought home to me how far we have strayed from our complete understanding of the Constitution of the United States.

Let me quote the first amendment, and this amendment is first because the 13 colonies decided this was the most important amendment. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press," et cetera.

The event I'm going to talk about that happened in my hometown received extensive coverage. A graduating student at a local public high school was asked to give a speech. This is a model student. He had done well, he was respected, and he was asked to talk about his life experiences. And in that talk, which he had to submit for approval ahead of time, he discussed his life experience, including his religious life. That was judged improper, and he was removed from that particular duty that day.

Now, I fail to understand how anyone reading the first amendment of the Constitution would think that the Supreme Court has ruled that a student discussing his life experiences could not mention his religious life. And yet that is how far we have come in this Nation in our misunderstanding of our origins and what it should be.

I come from a religious community. In fact, our community is sometimes called the "City of Churches," Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Last week, we dedicated a Hindu temple; a few years ago, a Buddhist temple. And we also have a Muslim mosque, actually, fairly close to my home.

We meet the test of the first amendment. We do not prohibit the free exercise of religion and the founding of various religious establishments. But I have to say, with this particular high school, I would not be able to give a commencement speech there because I would not be able to give a commencement speech without speaking about my life experiences and what I thought the students were going to face, and what they would need to face their life experiences.

I find it fascinating in the Capitol, we start with prayer every day, we have a chaplain, we have a Prayer Breakfast once a week, we have Bible studies in the Capitol. No one raises a feather against this and says this is wrong, this is unconstitutional. And if it's permissible in the Capitol of the United States, why is it not permissible across the Nation? It should be. Everyone should be free to discuss their beliefs and their religion and

their faith in God. That's what the first amendment is all about.

And let's not get hung up about Supreme Court decisions, ACLU lawsuits, et cetera. Let's recognize the clear language of the first amendment and let's let our citizens have the freedom that the founders of this Nation intended in the area of religious belief and the government's role therein.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, VERNON.

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to recognize, from the State of Colorado, Mr. DOUG LAMBORN.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues in recognition of American Religious History Week, and I thank Mr. FORBES for his leadership.

There are traces of America's religious history all across this Nation. And many things, even here in this very room, convince me that our Nation's founders were intent on preserving the religious beliefs and principles upon which our liberty depends.

Our Nation's motto, "In God we trust," is enshrined above the Speaker's chair right there. And across the Chamber is a facade of Moses, who gazes on the floor where we today write the law of the land. On the ceiling of this Chamber our State seals are found, one of which bears the motto, "Nil Sine Numine," which was adopted by my great State of Colorado. In English, these words mean "nothing without providence," a phrase that undoubtedly influenced the men and women who labored for the great Republic we have always known.

We are greatly indebted to the faith of our founders, which changed history. In fact, in 1818, our second President of the United States, John Adams, shared this reflection on the true American Revolution. He said, "The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people, a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations. This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments and affections of the people was the real American Revolution."

Our Judeo-Christian heritage, unlike any other in the history of the world, is deeply rooted in the philosophy that all men were created in the image of God, endowed with natural rights given to them by God alone rather than by the State. This is the bedrock principle which we must never forget. If we forget this, like many societies before us, we run the dangerous risk of falling prey to tyranny.

Early Americans understood that if government was the source of freedom rather than God, then government can also take it away. We declare ourselves "one Nation under God" with Him as the source of our rights and our freedom, and that makes us unique among the nations. It is for these reasons we recognize our religious heritage because it is still relevant to our freedom today.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, DOUG.

Now I'd like to recognize Mr. DAVID DAVIS from Tennessee.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. FORBES. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to be with you.

I rise tonight in support of H.R. 888.

Psalms 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." It doesn't say, "Blessed is the nation whose God was the Lord," and there's a difference. Our Founding Fathers understood the difference. As has been stated before, you can see it all through these hallowed Chambers. Above the Speaker's dais you will see the words, "In God we trust." Unfortunately, on TV at times you don't see the words "In God We Trust," they cut just a little bit below that. You will see Moses in full array in the back of the Chamber.

This building, the Capitol of the United States, was actually used for church services in its early history. Out in the Rotunda, you will see many beautiful paintings. The first one you come to in the Rotunda you will actually see Pocahontas, that you will remember from Thanksgiving. Well, Pocahontas, in the painting, is actually depicted right after she changed her name to Rebecca when she became a Christian and was baptized. Our Founding Fathers understood our Christian Nation and our Christian heritage.

And President James Buchanan understood this completely when he issued a proclamation in 1860 entitled "Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer." And he's quoted, "In this, the hour of our calamity and peril, to whom shall we resort for relief but to the God of our Fathers? His omnipotent arm only can save us from the awful effects of our own crimes and follies, of our own ingratitude and guilt towards our Heavenly Father." It certainly sounds to me like President James Buchanan understood "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

We understand today that America isn't great because we have a large government. We're great because down through history, if we had a problem, we turned to God first and then we turned to our neighbors, not to a big government. And if we want to continue to be that great Nation, we need to look to II Chronicles 7:14, which says, "If my people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

We need healing in our land.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you. Now I would like to recognize from Arizona, Mr. TRENT FRANKS.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. I thank Mr. FORBES, and I thank the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if, indeed, our Founding Fathers were right, that all men are created, then it follows that all men of reason much surely sense their duty to reverently acknowledge their Creator.

In the modern world of abundance in which we live, I am afraid that we have

become arrogant and often educated beyond our own common sense to the extent that we have forgotten sometimes that self-evident truth. But Mr. Speaker, how fortunate we are that those who went before us did not forget that foundational truth and they held it in their hearts.

President George Washington, on the very same day that Congress finished drafting the first amendment, declared, "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to Obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and to humbly implore His protection and favor." William Penn, one of our great champions of liberty and founder of what would become Pennsylvania said, "Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants." And President Andrew Jackson said, "The Bible is the bedrock on which our Republic rests."

Mr. Speaker, today the secular left often seeks to destroy any vestige of this Nation's religious heritage in history. They seek not to prevent the establishment of religion, but rather, to relentlessly destroy the free exercise thereof. Indeed, they are determined to rewrite America's history, devoid of any mention or trace of the very ideal that gave birth to this Nation in the first place. If left unchecked, they will not stop until they have pulled down the very last Christian cross or Star of David out in Arlington National Cemetery. But, Mr. Speaker, they will not succeed. Because, you see, there is something in the heart of every human being that knows that beyond this world, beyond the stars, and beyond life itself is an Almighty God that holds each one of us in His hands. Our Founding Fathers knew that truth, Mr. Speaker. They knew that America herself was proof that indeed there is an angel that still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm. I pray for the sake of America and all that made her great tonight that this generation does not forget this great, immutable, self-evident truth that for more than two centuries has been the bedrock foundation of the greatest Republic in the history of mankind.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, thank you for our time. I know that our time is expired. We have a few other gentlemen that I hope will be recognized later by the House. But, Mr. Speaker, thank you for your patience.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.